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Aristophanes and the Political Parties at Athens. By MAURICE CROISSET. Translated by JAMES LOEB. London: Macmillan, 1909. Pp. xx+192.

"A proper political history of Athenian comedy," which will neglect neither the viewpoint of the historian nor that of the *littérateur*, has yet to be written. M. Croiset proposes to fill this want in some degree in the case of Aristophanes, for whom alone of the comic poets the evidence is at all satisfactory. In the course of the work he hopes to answer some of the questions which arise in regard to the political affiliations of Aristophanes and the poet's attitude toward the Athenian democracy.

In his introduction, the author sets forth at once a striking thesis. Prior to the Peloponnesian war, the "rural democracy" constituted an actual majority of the citizen body. The radical "city democracy" of Athens proper and the Piraeus prevailed in the assembly, which the country folk seldom attended; but in the theater the rural party were in the majority. In comedy the latter found their true spokesman, and they "used it to take revenge on the city and on those whom the city admired." This relation between comedy and the rural democracy would probably appear much more clearly did we possess the lost literature of the fifth-century comedy.

Aristophanes, by birth and education, entertained a natural predilection for this rural party. In common with the other poets of comedy, he gleaned much of his material from the gossip of the clubs, but was not in sympathy with the extreme oligarchs. This combination of influences resulted in no fixed policy, but in an unstable and essentially personal point of view. To Cleon, however, and extremists of his type the poet was unalterably opposed, and the change in the Athenian democracy to which the demagogues contributed he viewed with profound regret. Properly speaking he belonged to no party, but in him we find the champion of the country and of Athenian tradition, and the opponent of those whom he regards as the corruptors of the Athenian spirit.

The plays fall into three main groups, representative of three periods of time, and illustrating the poet's changing policy. The *Babylonians*, the *Acharnians*, the *Knights*, and the *Wasps* form a "sort of satirical tetralogy" aimed at the demagogues, as typified in Cleon. The *Clouds* expresses popular, not aristocratic, thought, and shows ignorance on the part of Aristophanes of the true values of the Socratic teaching. In the *Peace*, the poet celebrates the ending of the war, recapitulates the reasons for his policy, and reviews his fight against the demagogues. Throughout this period, he is aggressive, even violent, but nowhere does he appear as a "party man" or as an opponent of true democracy.

The plays of the second period show a marked change. They are less bitter in tone, and exhibit no well-defined program. The *Birds* con-

tains only scattered allusions and little trace of a settled purpose; the *Thesmophoriazusae* cannot be regarded as having a serious political meaning. The *Lysistrata*, while a plea for peace and harmony, and an expression of the awakening Pan-Hellenic spirit, is too fanciful to be a serious program of peace. The *Frogs* is ethical and social, rather than political, and seems to be aimed at the growing tendency toward individualism, while the parabasis contains a playful warning against intolerance on the part of the restored democracy. Throughout this second period, Aristophanes shows himself as frankly democratic, but favoring a moderate democracy in which harmony and sincere reconciliation are to prevail.

The two plays of the last period are of slight importance politically. The *Ecclesiazusae* in its first part satirizes conditions at Athens, the second part is merely a "series of mad conceits." The *Plutus* contains little worthy of comment. The conclusions reached in the course of these discussions are summed up by the author in the following words: "The essential point is not to regard him (Aristophanes) as a party man. The substance of his political attitude was rather a sentiment, in part instinctive, than a conviction."

M. Croiset's interesting theory in regard to the alliance between comedy and the rural democracy can scarcely be accepted without reserve.¹ It is difficult to believe that the political complexion of the audiences in the theater differed so materially from that of the popular assemblies as a literal interpretation of the passages cited might indicate. It is more reasonable to find an explanation of the tolerance with which the comic attacks on democracy were received in a general recognition of their playful character and in the license which has always been the privilege of the comic poet. Comedy is by nature conservative, and finds its best material in extremes and innovation. The statement of the Pseudo-Xenophon (*Pol. Ath.* II. 18), that the comedy of the fifth century attacked, not so much the poor or the δημοτικοί as the rich, the nobly born, or the influential, and that attacks upon the δῆμος as a whole were not permitted, would seem to require explanation, since it involves a partial contradiction of the author's thesis.

Some few inaccuracies appear. ἄγροικος ὁργήν can hardly be taken as evidence that Demos is depicted as a "rustic," representing the peasantry (p. 84), since the word ἄγροικος is here used in its derived meaning, with regard to the temper of Demos, and is not a reference to the country. The statement on p. 91 that Aristophanes, in the event of his conviction on the charge ξενίας brought by Cleon, "would probably have been subjected to a ruinous fine, expelled from the city, and thus deprived of the right further to occupy himself with public affairs,"

¹ Mr. Rennie (*The Acharnians of Aristophanes*, London, 1909) discusses this thesis at greater length in his introduction (pp. 8ff.) and finds it overstated.

is incorrect. He would have been sold as a slave, and his entire property confiscated. On p. 101, Aristotle, *Cons. Ath.* 63, should not be cited for the jury system of the fifth century, since the passage describes the courts of the late fourth century. It is difficult to believe that *Birds* 40-41 (p. 122) is a specific allusion to the prosecutions which followed the affair of the Hermae. It is merely a commonplace in regard to Athens which twice finds a place in the earlier plays of Aristophanes (*Peace* 503-5, *Clouds* 207-8) and is elaborated in the Pseudo-Xenophonic treatise already referred to (III. 2). The references in the footnotes are sometimes wanting in accuracy (e.g., p. 6, n. 1, Xenophon *Memor.* vii. 6 should be III. vii. 6). A number of the references to the Pseudo-Xenophon lack the chapter (e.g., pp. 67-68).

None of the slight inaccuracies pointed out mars the charm or impairs the usefulness of the book. M. Croiset's enthusiasm and keen appreciation of the poet make every page vivid and interesting. The reader who cannot agree with all of his theories or accept all of his explanations will none the less be the first to recognize the value of his work.

Mr. Loeb offers a translation which affords slight occasion for adverse criticism. It is clear, smooth, and idiomatic, and, best of all, preserves in large measure the charm and spirit of the original. The English edition is enriched by an introduction from Professor John Williams White, and is made especially valuable by the addition of a satisfactory index—a feature which should be found in every philological work.

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The Unity of the Latin Subjunctive: A Quest. By EDWARD A. SONNENSCHIN. London: John Murray, 1910.

In a brief preliminary discussion touching original modal conditions in Indo-European, the author of this paper rejects the commonly accepted view that Indo-European was equipped with a series of complete and uniform modal systems, to each of which (e.g. the subjunctive) was attached a single root idea from which may be derived all the specific applications of a given mood as shown by Latin, Greek, etc.; he inclines rather to the not yet very popular theory that the meanings attached to the moods in Indo-European were miscellaneous and shifting, and that the well-differentiated modal uses of the historical period are the result of a long and gradual process of specialization and delimitation. In the course of this preliminary discussion he reviews the monograph of Oertel and Morris on *The Nature and Origin of Indo-European Inflection*, giving to it an interpretation which I think the authors hardly expected.

In the present article, however, Sonnenschein is not primarily concerned with the problem of original Indo-European modal uses; for he believes that, quite aside from the question of original modal conditions, there still